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ABSTRACT

In this paper two educational consultants, one a researcher in South African issues and the other a researcher in Kazakstan issues, share their respective experiences of teaching in South Africa and Kazakstan and examine their assumptions and methods of consultation. The paper analyzes how the consultants' observations of education in these emerging democracies can inform their work as educators in the United States and how their research endeavor can also serve to analyze the use and study of qualitative self-report data. It asks the following questions: What do consultants offer to educators in emerging democracies?; How can they assess their work?; How does knowledge of experiences inform what is known about teaching and learning?; and What have these experiences in South Africa and Kazakstan taught the consultants about teaching and learning in the United States? The paper provides an overview of education in both countries; explains the consultants' individual projects, methods, and educational objectives; and presents extensive observational data. (BT)

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Educational Consultation in Two Emerging Democracies: Kazakstan and South Africa

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Introduction

Julia Johnson Rothenberg Ph.D. received the Kovler Fellowship from Medical Education for South African Blacks (M.E.S.A.B.) in Spring 1999. Peter McDermott Ph.D. visited Kazakstan under a George Soros grant to the International Reading Association, the Reading, Writing and Critical Thinking project.

Kazakstan and South Africa, newly emerging from oppression and colonialism at opposite ends of the globe,have been struggling to provide equity in education to students in their countries. The authors of this paper each traveled to one of these areas to help educators to transform education. In each case, while we felt successful in limited goals of consultation, we also see the experience as useful in highlighting issues in the west. The research endeavor also serves to analyze our use and study of qualitative self-report data. We share our experiences of teaching in South Africa and Kazakstan and examine our assumptions and methods of consultation. We alo analyze how our observations of education in these emerging democracies can inform our work as educators in the United States.

Although the ethnicities, languages, and cultures of South

African and Kazak people differ greatly, their recent freedom from oppressive Soviet and apartheid systems provides interesting parallels. In both countries, language has been a major political issue. There are eleven official languages spoken in South Africa. Only ten percent of the people speak English as a first language (Norton Peirce and Stein, 1995), although English is the language of most of their universities (Mda, 1997). Afrikaans, as the government sponsored language of education, became the rallying point of anti-apartheid action from the 1970's onward. The native language of Kazak people is Kazak, but under Soviet times all education was conducted in Russian, and most textbooks are still in Russian. Although urban Kazaks often speak Russian and Kazak, in many rural areas only Kazak is spoken. Since the political change all school children and all civil servants, regardless of ethnicity, are required to pass a minimum competency test in Kazak, and Kazak language schools are growing in popularity.

Huge social, economic, and political barriers remaining in the two countries restrict their movement toward full democracy and shared educational opportunities for people. Social and educational change has been slow. Both countries have had controlling teaching systems imposed upon them, In Kazakstan, centralized and politicized from the USSR, and for South Africa, a complex imposition of British colonial education and the apartheid policies

for the education of non-white students. The educators in these countries wanted help in changing from hierarchical and authoritarian, neo-colonial systems of teaching to more interactive, humanitarian teaching which would respect and develop individual learners' capabilities. These ideals are dear to our hearts and we were eager to help the educators as instruments of change in the emerging democracies. *In situ*, we found our tasks to be daunting. As we have returned and talked with each other, we have realized that similar difficulties had emerged in both of our work, difficulties which raised basic questions about teaching and learning in varied cultural situations. Here, we will describe each of the situations in which we consulted and raise the questions and dilemmas we have faced.

In the process of discussing these issues, we will identify assumptions and underlying teaching issues in translating pedagogy to differing cultures. We, of course, are visitors from the United States, symbol of success for other countries. Despite our own serious overt and underlying racial conflicts, we are still the symbol of democracy in action, freedom for individuals. South Africa had been regarded as a pariah among nations in academic circles, and the university faculties with whom the first author worked were simply grateful for renewed academic interchange.

Our primary questions are the following:

- What do we offer to educators in emerging democracies?
- How can we assess our work?
- How does our knowledge of our experiences inform what we know about teaching and learning?
- What have our experiences in South Africa and Kazakstan taught us about teaching and learning in the United States?

Methodology

Independently we traveled and taught in South Africa and Kazakstan. One author worked and traveled in South Africa for three months during spring 1999. The other taught and traveled in Kazakstan for 10 weeks during the 1997-1999 academic years. Our methods have been qualitative/participant observer with constant interaction with our materials as we worked. Each of the authors took extensive daily field notes during the experiences and re-examined these on site. Individually, each cross-checked his/her notes with colleagues in the field at the time, both resident colleagues and from elsewhere. Each day while in the countries, we interacted with people and talked to them about educational reform. We learned about the status of education, their hopes and plans for the future, struggles and difficulties. In the United States, the first author has had continuing extensive communication with the South African university faculty members

concerning ongoing research and writing, and with some students. The second author maintains contact with colleagues in the States and Europe who work with him in Kazakstan.

Upon returning, each of us consulted with the other concerning the notes, questioning assumptions and clarifying factual material. Questions for the proposal and presentation were jointly developed, based on study and reflection of the field notes. As qualitative researchers, we also endeavor to present our concerns, possible biases and viewpoints. Since these societies are very different from each other, and from our own, there is considerable abstraction in developing common questions. We therefore invite challenging discussion concerning our assumptions and reasoning. We also refer to the work on biographical research, in a constant quest for viridical representation of this complex material (Grumet, 1987).

Peter McDermott Consultation in Central Asia: Kazakstan

I had not traveled internationally before my participation in the Reading, Writing, Critical Thinking (RWCT) project. Consequently, the experiences I acquired in Eastern Europe and Kazakstan, particularly in terms of what I learned about cultural differences between myself and teachers from the former Soviet system, were entirely new

and in some cases uncomfortable for me. I became aware of cultural differences in people's ways of thinking and talking about the world on my very first visit to Eastern Europe.

I travelled to Budapest in the summer of 1997 to participate in an orientation to the RWCT project. Budapest is a beautiful city, but the city's physical appearance surprised me. It seemed that the city had been in a time-warp, unpainted since World War II. This might indeed, have been true, but it embarrassed me to think that way. I knew I was affected by having lived my entire life in the richest country in the world. However, such physical differences would prove to be small when compared to what I would learn about people's ways of thinking. I learned the Soviet period created a culture of thinking and acting that is very alien to those who are accustomed to democratic free expression. Totalitarian rule generated covert and overt habits of thinking and talking that allowed people to circumvent pernicious laws and survive under senseless, bureaucratic regulations. However, many of these ways of thinking, which were so essential in Soviet times seem now (to me) to be

barriers to social reform.

A vivid example of how these ways of thinking and talking differed from mine occurred during my RWCT training at Lake Baleton, a resort which is about two hours ride from Budapest. In Baleton about 50 educators from America and 50 from the former Soviet Union met for a week to learn about the RWCT project. Here I heard Eastern European educators laugh and joke together about common phrases they had used to protect themselves when talking publicly. And I learned that what people said was often very different from what they personally believed. The Eastern Europeans grew up learning discourse strategies for guarding themselves from governmental retribution. For example, they chuckled when one of them shared a phrase they had all used before the political changes: "Although I haven't read it, this is what I think...". Such disclaimers were very common throughout the Soviet system when discussing a banned book. The Eastern Europeans also roared when one of them said, "While I disagree with my opinion, let me share it with you...". It seemed incredible to me that such an utterance could have protected anyone! The sentence seemed so transparent and

contradictory to my Western ears, and I wondered how it could have shielded anyone from harm.

Another phrase, this time a question, displayed the impracticality of the old communist system: "But does it work in theory?" The eastern Europeans again laughed at a system that accepted such statements. Perhaps they laughed a little at themselves because they recognized the irony in using questions to cover and protect themselves from a bureaucratic and vicious system in which one's employment and apartment could be instantly threatened at the discretion of a party bureaucrat. Evidently, eighty years of Soviet rule had created a culture in which public statements like these provided a protective shield when sharing politically unpopular information, questioning or criticizing authority.

People from the former Soviet block adopted, I think, a widespread sense of resignation to life's hardships. During the two years that I have worked in Kazakstan, most people are unwilling to discuss resisting bureaucracy. They believe that most Americans are bold, brassy and impatient, even foolish in their openness. They do not understand our

impatience with bureaucratic entanglements which are so much a part of their daily lives. for example, when traveling people must still have a stamp for everything and everywhere they go; one obtains a registration stamp at the hotel, receives a stamp at the airport, another stamp at one's destination, and stamps for return. Kazakstani people exude a general feeling of inevitability to life's ups and downs. Regardless of what comes their way, they are patient beyond belief and accepting of all difficulties thrown their way.

Although most Kazakstani people openly support the new political changes in their country, in private they often say life is now much harsher. Although I was unsure whether my colleagues were entirely forthcoming in their private conversations with me, this is a commonly expressed notion. Many do not believe that capitalism or democracy is the answer to their country's conditions. After four separate trips to Central Asia, I have come to realize that successful movement from communism to capitalism will take time. Changing peoples ways of thinking about the world will take more than a few seminars in democratic teaching methods.

Kazakstan's political leadership has changed little and most people appear accepting of it. It has become very common for me,

especially when visiting cities in Kazakstan to meet the mayor and the regional head officials of electrical power and education. What I learned is that these are typically the same people who ran things under the communist system - their titles changed (e.g., premier to president) but there has been little or no change in either national or local political leadership. Most surprising of all is that most Kazakstani people accept this status quo in their country's leadership. Although the country is now nominally democratic and a market-based economy, there has been little actual movement toward real freedom of expression and capitalism.

Corruption is common throughout the Kazakstan. I learned that the electricity typically goes off at night in most regions of the country. After several visits to Central Asia I became accustomed to it. Consequently, when recently visiting one region I anticipated having the electricity turned-off at night. However, I was pleasantly surprised to have lights throughout the night and was able to read. The next morning I remarked to my interpreter about how great it was to have electricity. She told me that it was a gift from the mayor for various neighborhoods who produced a good turn-out in the recent city election. Of course, only single candidates ran for many of the positions on the ballot!

Our project uses a "train the trainer" model in which we are training 30 teachers and teacher educators in strategies for critical thinking. After they are trained, they train others in their regions. During the second year of our project we have traveled throughout Kazakstan and observed our trainers' "open lessons" in which other teachers are invited to observe and question them about the RWCT methods. "Open lessons" are quite common throughout the country and it is not unusual to have fifteen teachers sitting in the back of a room observing a single teacher's lesson with a group of elementary children. Open lessons are an interesting part of their inservice educational system and a cost effective way of sharing educational innovations.

The teacher educational system in Kazakstan has been hierarchical and remains so today. Kazakstan is divided into nine oblasts or regions, and each oblast has its own pedagogical institute. Teachers are prepared in each of these oblasts. Teachers who study in a pedagogical institute in the capital of Almaty have more prestige than those who study in smaller institutes, not unlike our system of studying in ivy league colleges. Teachers completing their degrees in Russia, either at the pedagogical institute in Moscow or St. Petersburg have significant status in Kazakstan.

At Sage we use a clinical model of teacher evaluation that fosters skills of self-evaluation among of student teachers. My colleagues and I have tried to implement a similar clinical model in Kazakstan. We think of this model as a way to encourage reflective teaching practices and critical thinking. However, it has not worked well for us because our Kazakstani colleagues are accustomed to being told what is right and wrong about their classroom instruction. It seems to be their culture of teaching. Our in-country coordinators have argued that the job of a trainer is to tell people what they have done wrong and what must be improved. Although these colleagues openly profess that they want educational change in a democratic direction, they do not now realize what that looks like in everyday life, for students, teachers, and their supervisors,

This conflict between the Kazakstan model of teacher evaluation and the RWCT project has not been settled. We know that most of the teachers whom we have trained do not support our model. Their expectation is for the person with higher social status to offer an eloquent critique of a lesson. Last year, after a simulated lesson, the RWCT in-country coordinator stood-up and evaluated a lesson by frankly identifying lessons components that she liked and did not like. As she spoke the presenting teacher and audience wrote notes about what the

coordinator said and no one questioned her. However, this hierarchical model precludes a collegial model of self-assessment that we Western educators have been trying to develop. We think our clinical model better reflects critical thinking which is the purpose and goal of our program. But the project has made no progress on this matter. The culture of teaching in Kazakstan, I think, is top-down, and we have not been able to move them from it. I believe this way of thinking is a throw-back to Soviet times. It has been frustrating to the American volunteers because the purpose of our project is to stimulate critical thinking and democratic teaching methods, but we cannot seem to generate it within the group we are training!

Another area of cultural conflict regards the amount of information we receive while in the country. I do not know to what extent the information I am told reflects everyday reality. Although I doubt that I am told blatant lies, there are omissions and subtleties in what people share which make the truth difficult to discern. Last March, for example, another volunteer and I visited a city in the northern part of Kazakstan on the Russian border. It was a "closed city" under Soviet times, which as I understand it, meant under no circumstances could an outsider visit. Apparently, the city contained factories that were linked to the Soviet military forces, perhaps building

trucks, tanks, or airplanes. The city is bitter cold, minus 30 fahrenheit when I was there (my American winter coat was no match for this extreme temperature and I longed for a Kazak style leather coat and hat). On the first day of our arrival we visited a local school where we observed lessons and enjoyed dinner with the school's director. The dinner lasted three hours which is typical of Kazakstan hospitality. During the dinner there were many components to the meal and countless toasts of vodka to peaceful relations among people, our children, and education. Toast-giving is an important social skill and an expectation of all guests in Kazakstan - one would not be forgiven if he or she had not offered at least one toast to the hosts of the dinner and the people of Kazakstan. On the night of our visit the school director and a Peace Corps worker, who taught English in the school, consumed a large amount of vodka. Both were heavily intoxicated. The next morning we arrived at school to learn that it was closed. This surprised us because there was no apparent reason for it and children had gathered outside to enter. Our coordinator succinctly told us that it was closed because of the weather. But this astonished us. After all, the weather was no different that day than the previous. There was no additional snow, no wind or apparent change in the weather we were experiencing. My thought was that the school closed because the

director could not be awakened that morning. My American colleague thought the same. However, no one would confirm or offer any additional information about the school's closing. To this day we wonder why our coordinator would not reveal more information about the school's closing. But we did not pursue the matter, thinking it was better not to discuss it further with our Kazakstani hosts. Yet the incident remains a puzzle to us because we thought we had developed a trusting relationship with our in-country coordinator and could freely discuss all educational topics with her.

After four trips to this Central Asian country I have learned much about cultural differences in education between Kazakstan and the United States. Kazakstan's direct supervisory style of identifying strengths and weaknesses in teachers' lessons contradicts my understandings and experiences with reflective practices with student teachers in the United States. No matter how much I have tried to explained the need for reflective practice, Kazakstan teachers expect frank and specific feedback from their educational supervisors. I also know that I am not told all the information I need to interpret some events sensibly. Kazakstan people, even my friends, are protective of their authorities, and they defend authority in the best light. However, I suspect if the similar incredible practices were

observed in the U.S., Americans would be quick to question and criticize those responsible. I understand that we have acquired over two hundred years of experience with free expression and democratic practices. It will take more experience in Kazakstan, too.

In the meantime, we must question our strategies and approaches in the project. If the Kazakstani teachers do not want to change their direct and hierarchical methods of teacher education, what good is our insistence on our preferred clinical model? What effects *are* our approaches having, positive or negative? Are the facts of our presence and interactions change factors in themselves?

Consultation in South Africa

The change from apartheid to democracy in South Africa is almost earth shaking. It is difficult to describe the intensity and depth of the horrible system of apartheid, separation of the races, until the elections in 1994, just five years ago.[1] I cannot do justice to a description of the changes and the previous terror, so I will proceed to discussing current

[1] The system under apartheid labeled people by presumed skin color: "coloured" meant anyone of mixed heritage; "black" meant tribal Africans, although people of East Indian descent often were called black as well; "Asian" was anyone from China or Japan; Malaysians were usually designated "coloured".

education in the country. I will briefly address the question concerning education in general in South Africa, while the majority of my comments will concern higher education, specifically the U. of Capetown where I spent my time. Probably the clearest description of current education is actually on South African television. There is a documentary currently being shown entitled "Yizzo, Yizzo", which means in Zulu, loosely, "what's happening". It is a brave effort on the part of the South African Education Department and the state-supported television station, to show dramatically the state of education in a former township[2] high school. To put it mildly it is terrifying - drunken lascivious teachers bribing the kids and each other, textbooks being stolen on the way to the school by local hoodlums, classrooms that don't have anywhere near the materials, let alone desks and seats they need, kids coming to school each day from the shacks in their "opportunistic settlements". This is a term for the shanty towns that have grown up around most cities and large towns. The former "townships" were shanty towns that the apartheid government often tried to bulldoze down nightly.

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[2] Townships were areas designated for the African tribes, forcibly moved there by the white apartheid government. The most famous is Soweto (South west township) outside Johannesburg where Bishop Tutu still lives and Nelson Mandela first practiced law.

Residents became accustomed to moving everything they owned within a few minutes before the bulldozers arrived.

At the same time, in the schools and in this documentary, we see kids and teachers who are incredibly motivated and brave to the point of heroism, wanting learning and teaching desperately, even under terrible circumstances. All of this is a terrible legacy of apartheid, when the white government set out deliberately to educate black students only to be manual laborers, and not to covet the lives and welfare of their white masters -- this was explicit in national policy. The government and schools are working to improve, but as we all know from our poorer schools, it's a hard and difficult road to travel. There is also a great deal of international help, from Europe, Australia, and the U.S. in particular, coming into the country's educational institutions and teacher training institutions. I know that Michigan State is organizing a major teacher preparation program at U. of Durban-Westville in Natal (formerly the university for students of East Indian descent).

The U. of Capetown is a beautiful campus, and when you walk through it, you see a dazzling multicultural student population, every skin shade and numerous languages apparent. It is wonderful. The university is the best in the country, and the medical school is reputed to be the best in Africa. Until 1992,

both the university and the medical school selected their students as follows: each year one East Indian, one "coloured", one Asian, and one black (tribal) South African was selected to attend each white university. There was one black university and one East Indian university, badly underfunded and reputedly of low standards. This has actually been confirmed to me by people who attended those schools, who had great difficulty in their graduate work and had to take many additional courses (most often outside the country). Until 1994, Afrikaans was the official language of most of the medical schools, with the exception of U. of Capetown which has an English colonial background. The Universities of Pretoria and Stellenbosch are still taught primarily in Afrikaans, because of the backgrounds of their professors, although the universities' official language is English.

I primarily worked with the U. of Capetown medical school faculty, who have been struggling with teaching their newly diverse students of varied academic backgrounds, and who are also trying to reform their medical school curriculum. They have been accustomed to a European style of medical education from decades past featuring lectures, memorization, extremely difficult examinations (both written and oral) and rigorous clinical applications on the wards, following the first two years of

medical school. In South Africa, medical school begins immediately after secondary school, so students are completely dependent upon that background for preparation. Black and many "coloured" students have been extremely poorly prepared for their classes in medical school, and most of them are speaking English as a third language (following their tribal language and Afrikaans).

In my work with the medical school, I had twice weekly workshops with members of the faculty to help them to teach in cooperative groups, use less lecture and to address individuals and groups within the lectures. For example, I taught them ways to learn students' names (often very unfamiliar names to them, new to diversity) and to say "hello, how are you?" in each of the 11 languages characteristically spoken in their classes. The students (with whom I lived in the Medical Residence for the time I was there) taught me, and I taught them, at which the professors were amazed. I also attended their lectures and department meetings for discussions of their concerns and other crucial pedagogical points for these professors. For example, a characteristic way to teach pathology was for the lecturer to present an hour and a half of slides on an enormous screen, all of which were cases, in one lecture, of edema. Edema is a medical concept described in medical dictionaries as: "the presence of

abnormally large quantities of fluid in the inter-cellular tissue spaces of the body". These may be very different looking depending if one is observing a swollen sprained ankle or a malignant tumor on a lymph node. I observed that the categories of edema were certainly clear to the professors but not to me or the students. So, in the workshop following that lecture, we worked on concept development in teaching, since the lecture was teaching the concept of edema by examples. Another major change was the introduction of case studies of illness early in medical school, something they had previously only used as teaching material in the fifth and sixth years.

The professors said they enjoyed the changes they made, and they are currently working on incorporating the pedagogical changes into curriculum reform. The students, of all backgrounds, were immediately responsive to changes to teaching, which was, of course, very rewarding to their professors and to me, too. In one instance of a pedagogical strategy, students enjoyed, somewhat to everyone's surprise, having the professor make a random group assignment to work on cadavers. They spoke of the felicitous combination of tribal Africans accustomed to group cooperation and the individualistic and competitive Anglo-Africans.

Currently there is a good deal of financial support for students of color who would not otherwise be able to go to

college and/or medical school. The group who sponsored me, Medical Education for South African Blacks, pays tuition and board for all black medical students, a large number of dental students, and a number of graduate students in pharmacology and physical therapy. This keeps the students in school financially, although many of them talk of feeling guilty and enormously responsible for their families. The unemployment figures for black South Africans range from 60% to almost 100% in some villages. Restructuring and "transformation" (their term for remaking a multicultural democratic society) takes a long time.

The U. of Capetown is incredibly eager and willing to work on the problems of education in a diverse world. Other universities are neither as fortunate in their faculties nor as open to progressive change. There is still a mainly Afrikaans university at U. Stellenbosch. At Stellenbosch their idea of integration is primarily to enroll students of Indian and Malaysian background and to import students from Kenya to satisfy new regulations, with few or no tribal South African students. The Universities of Westville-Durban and Natal in eastern South Africa are rife with student and labor unrest. They have had major strikes by students and faculty in the recent semesters.

Comparisons and Contrasts

The major comparison between these two countries is that,

although at opposite ends of the globe, they are both countries where society was previously highly oppressive and regimented. Both find themselves making decisions about education without much democratic background. South Africans have to remake education as a democratic and equal endeavor, and so do the Kazaks. Probably a very real difference is that many South Africans feel themselves newly powerful and free and assertive. They have lots of trouble allocating resources to education, but a great deal of hope.

There are also still many conflicts about how to go about changing their educational system at all levels. In a recent discussion with an orthopedic surgeon, he said the education of people of color had to begin at the earliest point and work its way upward, so that students would be prepared to go to medical school. As we know, this is a common argument in places in the United States and Europe as well. It belies the evidence that I saw in the young people at the university; they were, in fact, learning, doing, becoming doctors of quality, and many of their professors agreed (with some strikingly difficult exceptions).

Obviously, I am an outsider, looking in and around me in South Africa. There is an enormous amount I don't know, and can't know. There are certainly things that people with whom I worked do not and will not share with me. It seems to me that the

country needs to see those doctors in practice, and many other professionals from the previously oppressed groups. The medical students said to me, "we need more role models in the medical school". I said:"You're it; you have to become the role models."

Aspects of the work in South Africa framed and focused thinking about the United States and the increasingly diverse backgrounds of higher education students. Many of the pedagogical issues are the same: helping students to translate from visual media to verbal and vice versa, problems with three-dimensional learning (from picture to slides to the cadaver), apprehending the increasing knowledge base, teaching larger groups when you want to teach smaller groups, techniques of using groups, and issues surrounding racism and political correctness.

Faculty teachers at times would raise questions about new students' lacks in academic skills and knowledge. I addressed each of these specifically and we often found that the problems were not, in fact, those of one or two ethnic groups of students, but were common to a number of people. For example, many students have difficulty with writing skills, and with memorizing anatomical terms an functions. We also discussed ways that problem-solving might be differently represented in cultures less familiar to us as academics.

Of course, there are very real problems stemming from educational backgrounds and cultural differences. Examinations in the medical school in South Africa (and elsewhere?) are notoriously culture bound, and strategies of successfully taking examinations are highly

susceptible to training in preparatory years. Oral exams, called "vyvers" (an Afrikaans abbreviation) at the U. of Capetown, are difficult for students whose first language is not English, and we discussed ways in which students, in formal and informal groups, can help each other to use English verbally.

Perhaps the most important aspect of these meetings was our increasing discussion of the positive and new aspects of cultural experience that the diversity of the students brings to the medical school. I have come to think that this notion could be a real boon to consideration of methods for student retention in the United States. Many of us in academia still have a pervasive and insidious sense of the model of "the disadvantaged student" in our universities, who brings problems to school with him/her. Working with the South African students and their professors has made more clearly the point that deplorably bad education is very different from culture (although certainly, bad, oppressive education can interfere with one's culture and traditions). We all have a great deal to learn about the cultures (for example, valuable community approaches to health problems) that students bring to the university.

In addition to the importance of the cultures in which they were brought up, black and other students who have been discriminated against have developed keen survival and adaptive skills that can serve them well. As with most of us, however, not all of such skills serve people well, and the students also learn about this every day. It is fascinating to think about and work on distinguishing among cultural characteristics that add breadth and depth to the medical school and the society, and the characteristics learned from legacies of bad education.

oppression, and prejudice. Such work is valuable wherever it occurs.

For both authors, we know that uppermost in our experiences has been the strong desire to do well, to help our new friends, teachers and students. We may not have accomplished that. Despite our detailed notes and comparisons with colleagues and each other, our memories may have distorted reality in favor of our having done well. However, in trying to become better teachers and to develop better communities of learners around the world, our narrative of experience is inextricably bound with whatever *is* real. We have tried to observe and listen, to be open and responsive to the needs and concerns of the people with whom we have consulted. In both countries, there is great caution in commenting on the past, and we have respected that despite our real curiosity. A black colleague commented that an ironic joke among black South Africans is that now *no one* had been in favor of apartheid, and *no one* had benefited from it. A drive through the wealthy white neighborhoods with their high fortified walls, and the nearby destitute "opportunistic settlements" is all the observation anyone needs.

Grumet says, "the space and time of our lives are not merely a priori categories but are conditions that we share with other people" (1987, p.321). A narrative experience is one that attempts to describe that space and time in a meaningful way for

an episode in the course of one's life. For these narratives, these stories of particular times and places help us to change our work as educators and researchers -- to clearer examination, deeper and more analytical reflection, further and more constant looking at the hierarchical structures of teaching and learning.

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